

Carol Coogan

Illustration
United States

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Act now to save a life when you are gone

It is harder to realize than to give. Sandra Kinschack is someone who does because of actions she's played in our report, raising funds for the National Kidney Foundation. And we know her father, Rudy Borgegale, signed in the Hiltown who died last year at 82. We'd talked to him the year before about his savings, how he wouldn't afford to fix a broken motor and so passed a money-aid bill into action. He wasn't one to complain or feel sorry for himself. "This one works better and cost less," he said. He made do with what he had. He found a way. Borgegale was raised in the Hiltown, where he and his wife would raise their own children a generation later. He hadn't liked the drudgery of his family's dairy farm and left at age 13 to join the Army. That was in the midst of the Korean War, and he was sent to the front lines. There, he ran a bulldozer, building roads and digging holes for the tanks. He liked the intensity of the work. "You didn't have things to worry about," he said. "Your only goal was just keeping yourself alive. You had your meals and a place to sleep. You took care of yourself and made sure not to get hit. You lived or died. That was it." If you don't die, that's pretty well worth any life. We thought about Rudy Borgegale this week because our Hiltown reporter, Mervin Lutz, wrote a profile of his daughter. She works now with others in her family, keeping her father's will running despite the tough times. She has his tenacity, his indomitable spirit. It's been tested over the years by her kidney disease. Diagnosed in her thirties, Kinschack is now 55. She resented when her brother, Brian, concerned about her deteriorating health, offered her one of his kidneys. "I actually kind of refused him at first, but he was serious," she said. She enjoyed being active again; the transplanted kidney lasted until 2006. She's back on dialysis now for hours each day — grateful she can do it at home — and is waiting for another kidney.

A man newly diagnosed with kidney disease dropped by the newsstand while our reporter was interviewing Kinschack. She gave him the comfort of straightforward advice. He said later she gave him hope. Her example inspires us. Her disease and the medical team that treats it has left her grateful, not bitter or resentful. The chance of it is that advances in medical technology would allow tens of thousands of people to live full lives, or to survive at all if we, as a society, could be more generous as we think of dying. It takes

say, "You must fill out the following action: Would you like to be added to the Donate Life Registry?" The applicant can then check "yes" or skip to the next question. The law is named for Lauren Shields, from Stony Point, whose enlarged heart could no longer sustain her. At 11, she was placed in a medically induced coma as she waited for a new heart. Her six-week wait ended on March 15, 2009 with a donated heart and renewed life. The road to recovery was difficult as she suffered a stroke, underwent kidney dialysis and physical therapy, and used a wheelchair. "Now she is back to being healthy and active," writes Mary-Elise Bink for the New York Organ Donor Network, "and she is an outspoken advocate for organ donation." The statistics for New York State are grim. Of the 115,000 people on national waiting lists for organ transplants, 8,700 of them are New Yorkers. Yet New York ranks near the bottom of eligible people enrolled in the organ donor program. Just 20 percent of adult New Yorkers, aged 18 and over, have enrolled in the New York State Donate Life Registry as organ, tissue, and eye donors. Nationwide, the average is 45 percent. While the new law could help, there is no need to postpone an act of vital generosity. New Yorkers don't need to apply for a driver's license to sign up. You can go right to the New York State Health Department's website — <http://www.health.ny.gov/donate-life> — and sign up now.

The Donate Life Registry, created in 2006, makes families no longer have to give consent to have a deceased member's organs donated. You can decide for yourself and give legal consent now. It takes but a few minutes. Why wait? Our hearts, our kidneys, our lungs, our eyes, or our tissue are of no use to us once we are dead. Yet, our person's donation could improve 50 people's lives. Think of other children like Lauren Shields who now now lying in a coma, dying, for want of a heart. Or think of how the everyday life of someone like Sandra Kinschack could be improved with a transplanted kidney. In the midst of her trials, she has found ways to help and give hope to others. Her father said of life in a war zone: "Your only goal was just keeping yourself alive. You took care of yourself and made sure not to get hit. You lived or died. That was it." Sometimes, if we're not in a war zone or fighting to stay alive, we get to help others. Let's do it now, before it's too late.

"Think of other children like Lauren Shields who are now lying in a coma, dying, for want of a heart."



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Take care with the lamp of technology
Some things can't be put back in the bottle

Jeff Hain asked us not to use his son's name or picture in our paper. We advise him greatly for standing by his son. His son is the 16-year-old from Barre-Koon-Waterloo who was all over the news recently because, Hain says, after his cell phone was recovered during a study hall at school, the principal used it to access nude pictures of his son's girlfriend. The principal called the Albany County Sheriff's Office. The sheriff's office was out to arrest the 16-year-old. The son is now 14, sending her pictures. Schools should be a place where kids can learn lessons without getting arrested. We greeted Hain's request, although his son said he was in trouble with his name and picture being in the paper since everyone at school — those in his world, in this time and place — knew who it was. The reason we withheld the name and photo — which is ours for our newspaper — is we know that the Internet has made for beyond the here and now. Most every week, we get calls from people who were arrested in the past, sometimes decades ago, whose names appear online at the local library's website for historic newspapers. The critics appear instantly and effortlessly for anyone typing their names into a search engine. We continue to report local arrests because we believe it is important for the public to know both about the crime in the community and also about the job being done by the police they are paying. But it was different when the week's newspaper went out in the trash. Someone would steal the news of a language arrest only if he were purposefully looking for it, was by going to the library and searching out the information. Just this week, we got a call from a woman who said her shame at getting a job was again because of a mistake she made when she was 17 and was arrested for shoplifting at Crowsnest Mall. That will now follow her for the rest of her life. So we thank Mr. Hain is wise to protect his son from something that might haunt him in a future he cannot yet foresee. For the very same reason, we can see why the school principal had concern. Mr. Hain like most of his son's friends is a boy. The principal works when it comes to Fourth Amendment rights protecting citizens from random search and seizure. Although there's little most prominent on the matter, as the face of it, it seems like an illegal search if the picture was not immediately visible on the phone. But where the principal breaks down is that the words in a paper diary, or a nude picture posted in a diary, are not instantly and easily transmittable to a wide audience the way nude images are. World Tyler Clements have jumped to his death from the George Washington Bridge in 2010 if his Rutgers roommate had just seen him kissing another man, rather than sitting at and using Twitter followers to watch it. No Hain also said that boys will be boys and likened it to kids of his generation looking at pictures in Playboy magazine. In even earlier times, scores of National Geographic informed generations about the naked human anatomy. But, again, there is no important difference. Those magazine images are of people who are unknown to the curious young viewers. That is very different from nude pictures of a 16-year-old girl who works the same school hallway. It would have been unfair to her to have such pictures transmitted about. Mind you, we're not saying they were. But we are saying a school administrator is not out of line to have concern. We believe the current course of action would have been to have the boy and his parents meet with the principal to look through the images together to determine if any harm had been done. There's been a sea change in technology in the last decade and schools need to be able to stay on top of the waves. Kids need to be educated on what should and should not be done. A 2011 Pulitzer article reported that 1 percent of teens between the ages of 13 and 17 said they had appeared in or created sexually explicit images or videos. An earlier survey, in 2008, by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and Cosmopolitan found 29 per cent of teens between 13 and 19 reported they had sent or posted nude or semi-nude pictures or videos of themselves. That's a wide disparity, but, in any case, it's clear it is happening. New York State was wise to assist the Cyberstalking Youth Rescue Act last year to channel the few minors involved for the first time in solving crimes from family courts to educational programs run by the state's Office of Children and Family Services, resulting in dismissal of the charges. The Internet age can be unforgiving and what is meant as a Valentine for a boyfriend can end up as a nightmare. with people we wouldn't otherwise know. But it can also cut down on home human interchanges, intimacy as we once knew it. Schools have a chance to pave the way. While BOK doesn't allow students to use cell phones, other districts, like Guilford, are pushing for wireless networks at school that would allow mobile devices like cell phones to be used regularly as a part of instruction. "The greatest and maybe saddest irony in the majority of our students' lives is that they are almost everywhere, but their learning is nowhere." —

